

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4183

DEPT PASS OAU COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, OAU, AO, BC, MZ, RH, SF, TZ, UK, US, ZA
SUBJ: MENGISTU SPEECH AND PROPOSALS AT OAU SUMMIT

REF: A. LIBREVILLE 1678, B. LIBREVILLE 1697

SUMMARY: AT JULY 5 AIRPORT NEWS CONFERENCE UPON RETURN
FROM 14TH ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU) SUMMIT,
ETHIOPIAN HEAD OF STATE LTCOL MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM
HIGHLIGHTED MAJOR POINTS FROM LENGTHY SUMMIT SPEECH.
MENGISTU EMPHASIZED SUDANESE AND SOMALI INTERFERENCE
IN ETHIOPIAN AFFAIRS AND OFFERED ETHIOPIAN SUPPORT TO
SPECIAL COMMITTEE FORMED BY SUMMIT TO RESOLVE SUDANESE-
ETHIOPIAN PROBLEMS. HE ALSO STATED OAU HAD ACCEPTED
ETHIOPIAN PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL MONITORING DIVISION
WITHIN OAU SECRETARIAT TO FOLLOW OBSERVANCE OF OAU
CHARTER'S PRINCIPLES. MENGISTU REPEATED ETHIOPIA'S
PLEDGE TO TRAIN FIGHTERS FOR LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN
AFRICA, SAID THAT HIS TALKS WITH UN SEC GEN WALDHEIM
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CENTERED ON REFUGEE PROBLEM AND HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THAT
OAU MEMBERS WERE NOT EVEN WILLING TO LISTEN TO QUESTION
OF RELOCATING OAU HEADQUARTERS. MENGISTU SPEECH ALSO
URGED OAU TO IMPLEMENT OWN RESTRUCTURING WITHOUT DELAY
IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUB-
MITTED TO 29TH OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND TO ELIMINATE
UNDUE CONSTRAINTS UPON ADMINISTRATIVE SEC GEN IN DIS-

CHARGE OF HIS DUTIES. END SUMMARY.

1. JULY 6 ETHIOPIAN HERALD CARRIED FULL TEXT MENGISTU SPEECH AT 14TH OAU SUMMIT WHICH FOCUSED ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AND HORN OF AFRICA ISSUES. IN AIRPORT NEWS CONFERENCE UPON RETURN FROM LIBREVILLE, MENGISTU FULLY ENDORSED "SPECIAL COMMITTEE" SET UP BY SUMMIT CONFERENCE TO RESOLVE EXISTING PROBLEMS BETWEEN SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA. (COMMENT: COMMITTEE WOULD APPEAR TO SERVE ETHIOPIA'S PURPOSES, GIVEN APPARENT LACK DURING CONFERENCE OF ANY INDICATION THAT OAU CONSIDERS ERITREAN PROBLEM AS OTHER THAN INTERNAL ETHIOPIAN MATTER, THEREBY UNDERCUTTING POSITION SUPPORTED BY SUDAN THAT ERITREA DISTINCT ENTITY WHOSE INDEPENDENCE SUDAN ATTEMPTING TO ASSURE. ASSUMING OAU "SPECIAL COMMITTEE" ADHERES TO OAU PRINCIPLE OF RESPECT FOR BORDERS EXISTING WHEN MEMBER STATES ACHIEVED NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, SUDANESE SUPPORT FOR SECESSIONISTS LIKELY TO BE DISCREDITED BY MOST OAU MEMBERS, "MODERATES" AND "RADICALS" ALIKE.) WHILE AT SUMMIT, MENGISTU MET WITH HEADS OF STATE FROM FIVE OF NINE MEMBER COUNTRIES APPOINTED TO "SPECIAL COMMITTEE."

2. MENGISTU DREW DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUDAN AND SOMALIA, STATING SOMALIA HAD TOTAL DISREGARD FOR CONDUCT OF LAW AND HAD LONG-STANDING CLAIMS ON ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY, WHEREAS PROBLEMS BETWEEN BROTHERLY PEOPLES OF ETHIOPIA
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AND SUDAN WERE ARTIFICIAL HURDLES CREATED BY SUDANESE LEADERS. HOWEVER, HE REITERATED ETHIOPIAN PERCEPTION THAT TWO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES COLLUDING TO UNDERMINE ETHIOPIA'S UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.

3. IN OTHER OAU SUMMIT DEVELOPMENT FAVORABLE TO IMMEDIATE ETHIOPIAN INTERESTS, MENGISTU CITED ETHIOPIAN INITIATIVE, WHICH HE CLAIMED ACCEPTED BY ASSEMBLY, TO ESTABLISH SPECIAL MONITORING DIVISION WITHIN OAU SECRETARIAT (LOCATED IN ADDIS ABABA), TO FOLLOW CLOSELY OBSERVANCE OF OAU PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN MEMBER COUNTRIES' INTERNAL AFFAIRS. MENGISTU PRESUMABLY REFERRING TO RELATED NIGERIAN PROPOSAL ADOPTED BY SUMMIT TO STRENGTHEN OAU MACHINERY FOR DEALING WITH INTRA-AFRICA DISPUTES. (LIBREVILLE 1718). THIS NEW COMMITTEE COULD INHIBIT OVERT SOMALI AND SUDANESE INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA, OR AT LEAST GIVE "IMPARTIAL COMMITTEE" CHANCE TO "EXPOSE" WHATEVER INVOLVEMENT MAY ARISE.

4. IN KEEPING WITH LONG ETHIOPIAN COMMITMENT TO PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY, PRESS PLAYED UP MENGISTU PLEDGE TO TRAIN 1,000 FIGHTERS SOON AND 5,000 WITHIN YEAR TO

ASSIST IN "TOTAL LIBERATION" OF AFRICA FROM COLONIAL
RULE. JUDGING FROM FAVORABLE RECEPTION TO MENGISTU
SUMMIT SPEECH, ETHIOPIA MAY HAVE SEIZED INITIATIVE,
WHICH FRONT LINE AFRICAN STATES WILL WELCOME.

5. DURING AIRPORT NEWS CONFERENCE, MENGISTU AGAIN
DEMONSTRATED ETHIOPIA'S SENSITIVITY TO HUMAN RIGHTS
QUESTION, STATING TALKS WITH UN SEC GEN WALDHEIM FOCUSED
ON REFUGEE PROBLEM IN AREA AND WESTERN MEDIA FABRICATION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ETHIOPIA. MENGISTU
ASSURED PRESS ETHIOPIA IS COUNTRY WHERE RESPECT FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS ENSURED. ON ISSUE OF RELOCATING OAU HEAD-
QUARTERS, MENGISTU STATED FLATLY ISSUE HAD NOT BEEN RAISED
AT LIBREVILLE, NOR WERE OAU MEMBERS "EVEN WILLING TO HEAR
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ABOUT IT." CONTRARY TO PAST RELUCTANCE BY OAU MEMBER
STATES TO ACCORD MUCH AUTHORITY TO OAU SEC GEN, MENGISTU
URGED SEC GEN'S POWERS BE ENHANCED. RESTRUCTURING OF
OAU WOULD PRESUMABLY REFLECT INCREASE OF POWER FOR SEC GEN
AND ENHANCEMENT OF OAU CAPACITY TO TAKE DECISIVE ACTIONS.

7. COMMENT: FROM ETHIOPIAN PERSPECTIVE, 14TH OAU SUMMIT
A SUCCESS. CREATION OF TWO NEW SPECIAL COMMITTEES TO
DEAL WITH INTRA-AFRICAN CONTROVERSIES SEEN HERE AS OAU
ACCEPTANCE OF STRONG CASE MADE BY MENGISTU FOR OAU
PRINCIPLES OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND NON-INTERFERENCE.
HIS DEFENSE OF CHARTER PRINCIPLES APPEARS INTENDED TO
OUTFLANK ETHIOPIA'S TWO NEIGHBORS DIPLOMATICALLY.
BALANCE WITHIN SPEECH AND CONCRETE OFFER OF FIGHTERS
FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA ALSO DESIGNED TO WIN ETHIOPIA CREDIT
AMONG MEMBERS.
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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED OAU COLLECTIVE.

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